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## **Look Alive! Tips for Engaging Students in the Physical and/or Virtual Classroom**

Samantha E. Robinson

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# Look Alive!

*Tips for Engaging Students in the Physical and/or Virtual Classroom*

TFSC Virtual Winter Teaching Symposium, January 2021

Samantha Robinson, Department of Mathematical Sciences



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*Tips for Engaging Students in the Physical and/or Virtual Classroom*

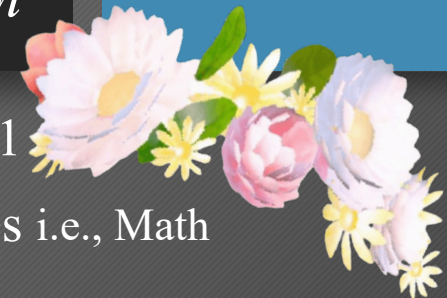
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The slide features decorative elements including a cluster of red hearts on the left, a large bouquet of pink, yellow, and purple flowers in the top right, and a smaller floral arrangement in the bottom right. The background is a dark gray gradient with a horizontal blue band.

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# Disclaimer



Subject Matter



Class Size



Goals



**SUBJECT: YOUR CLASS Remote, YOUR NAME Style - Welcome!!**

Welcome to \_\_\_\_\_!

The course does not start for \_\_\_\_\_! So definitely relax just a bit longer if you are able! However, I did want to touch base with all of the currently registered students and provide some information ahead of time, especially given our remote instruction format for the upcoming term.

First of all, I am attaching the following documents:

- The Course Syllabus, Day 1 Materials, Etc.

If you want to start reviewing this informational material, go for it!

*Please note that you will not be able to access BB until Sunday evening, 01/10/21. I \*will\* email everyone when the BB course is live!*

Some syllabus highlights more specific to our remote instruction format:

- Class Participation and Discussions
  - Mention camera, audio, etc.
- Tips for Success
  - Include a definition of success or a note on success

e.g., Speaking of your own person, don't compare yourself to anyone else in this class! For the last months, we have been told again and again that we are all in the same boat but we simply aren't! Some of you are working full-time, some have children, some have WiFi issues (I know I do 😞), some have health issues, some are juggling too many things to list them all... No matter what, I am here to help you succeed in this course where "success" is defined by you and your goals alone! Focus on *\*your\** success and we will get there!

## **Speaking of Disclaimers:**

*Send That Welcome Email!*



# What Is Student Engagement?

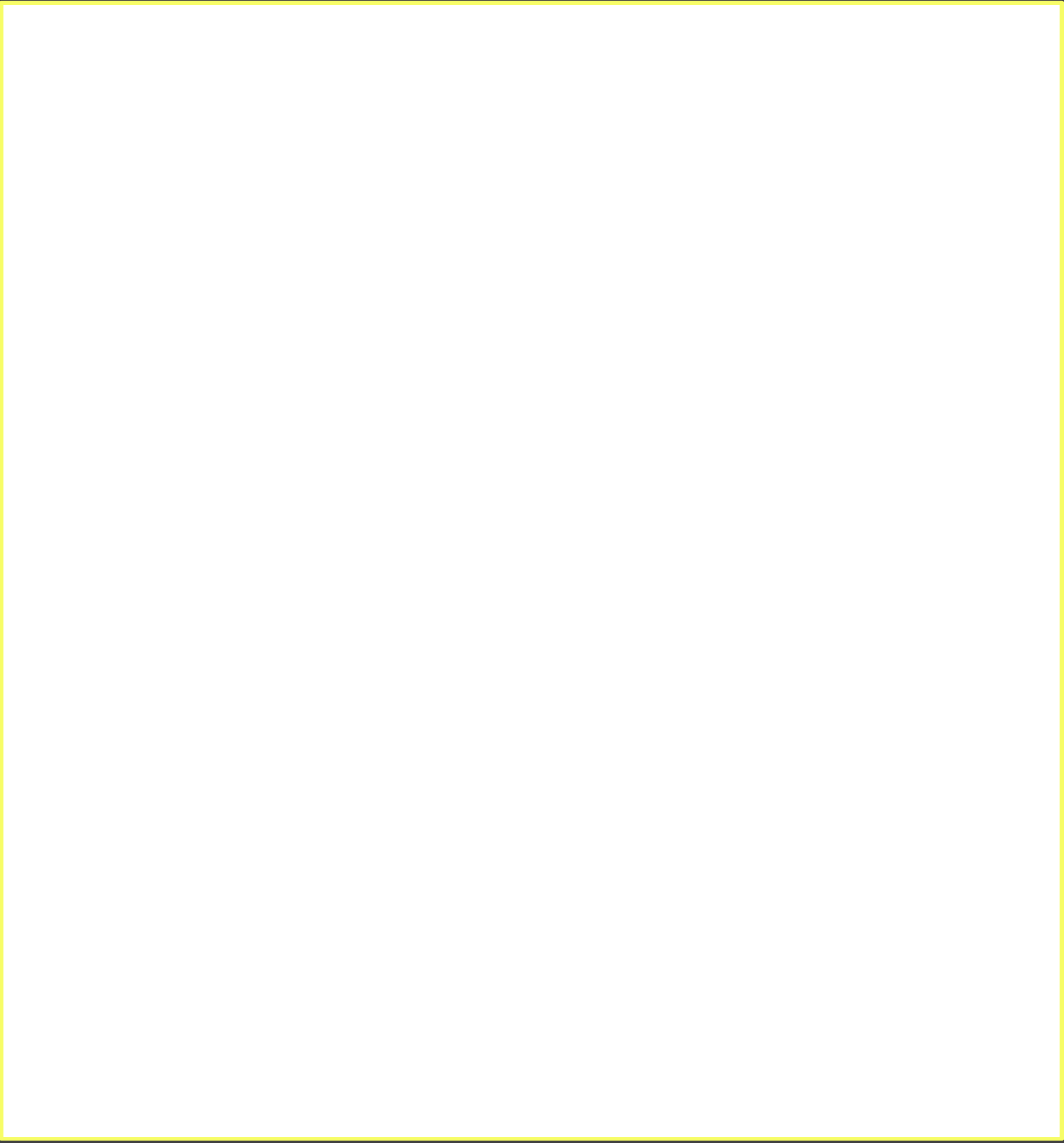
- What Does It Look Like?
- How Do We Define It?



# SOCIAL DISTANCING











# Reality Check

## The Students



# Reality Check

**The Students**



**Us**



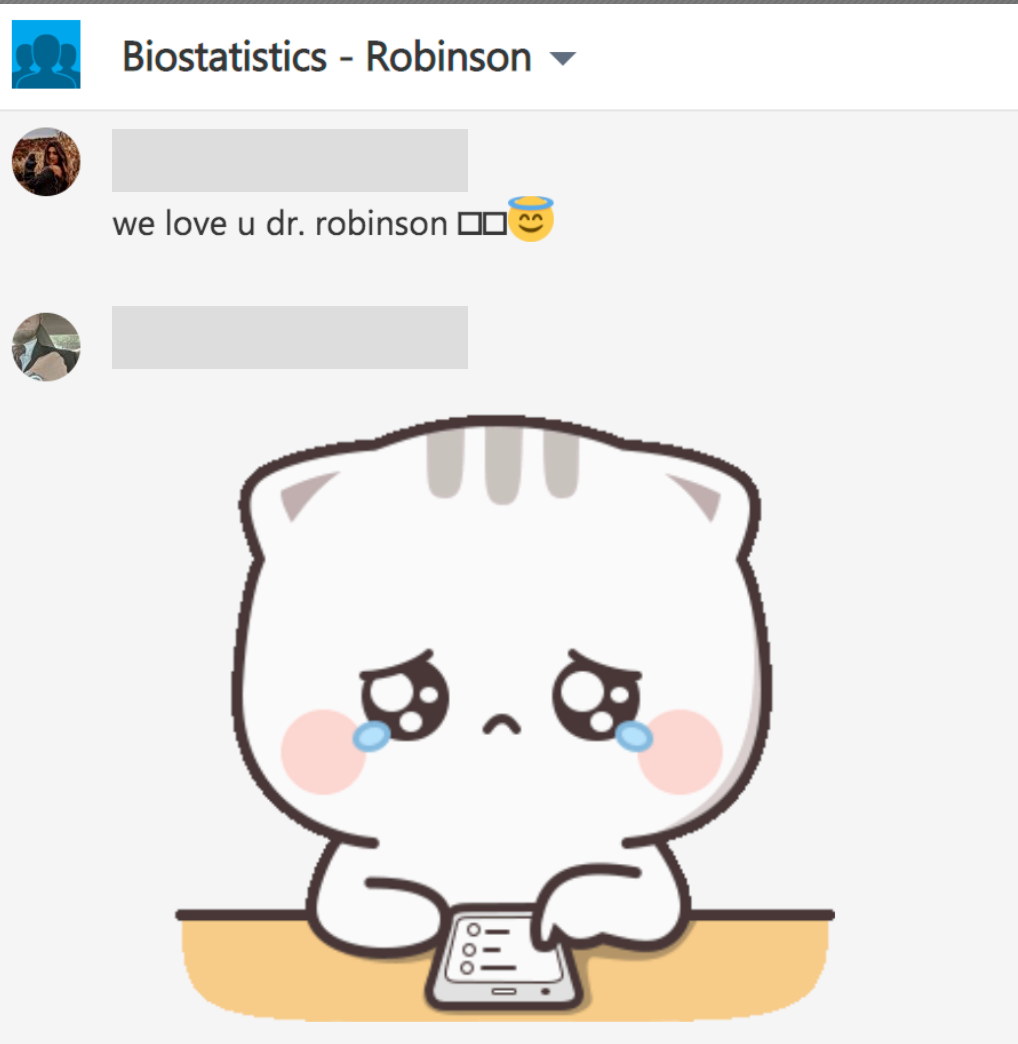


# Where's The Care!

- “A positive, caring, respectful environment is a prior condition to learning.”  
- John Hattie
- “Caring about students beyond the boundaries of the classroom is the first step of sparking engagement!” and keeping engagement!
- If we go into our rooms (or our zoom rooms) each day to teach but not to connect, we can't expect students to care beyond a test score, if that.
- Regardless of how busy we are, we cannot underestimate the importance of cultivating a classroom culture in which students feel valued and respected because... if our students do not feel valued and respected then they are not learning and, if they are not learning, all of our tasks (and, consequently, all of our efforts) are meaningless!!



sewrob@uark.edu



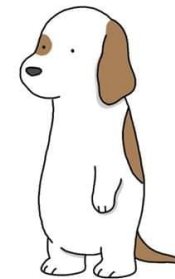
this bag is  
empty. did you  
just get me  
an empty bag?



yes.



I love it  
so much.







Let Me Paint You A Picture



Imagine Yourself As An Adult In The Classroom  
... \*My\* Classroom



Before Monday

---

Review & Reflect

---

Reframe

---

Refocus & Redefine

---

Retain

# Review, Reflect, Reframe and Refocus!

## Camera On? Attendance?

If you require it, why?

Are you defaulting to old reasoning?

Explain your reasoning to students.

Secret Finding: \_\_\_\_\_ #Secret!

## Lecture Pace? Whiteboard Time?

Watch your pace.

Differs from traditional classroom.

Note: If you are thinking “they can watch the recording later”... Reflect on that statement.

## Goals. Goals. Goals!!!

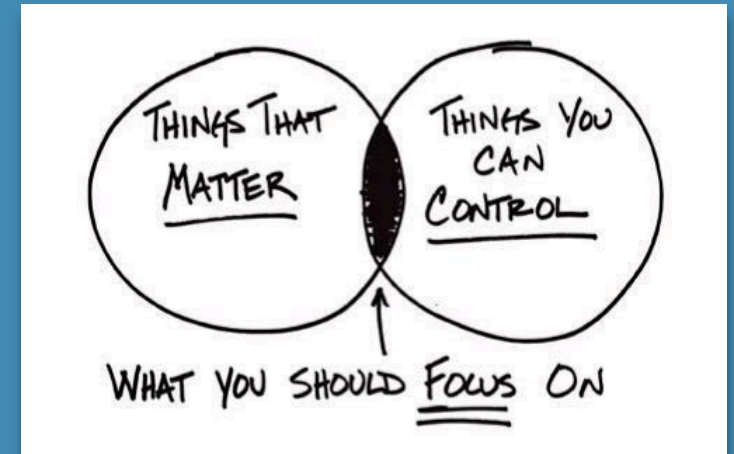
Keep your goals in mind.

Keep your definition of engagement in mind.

And, speaking of mind, ... \_\_\_\_\_

# Redefine Engagement & Seek To Retain!

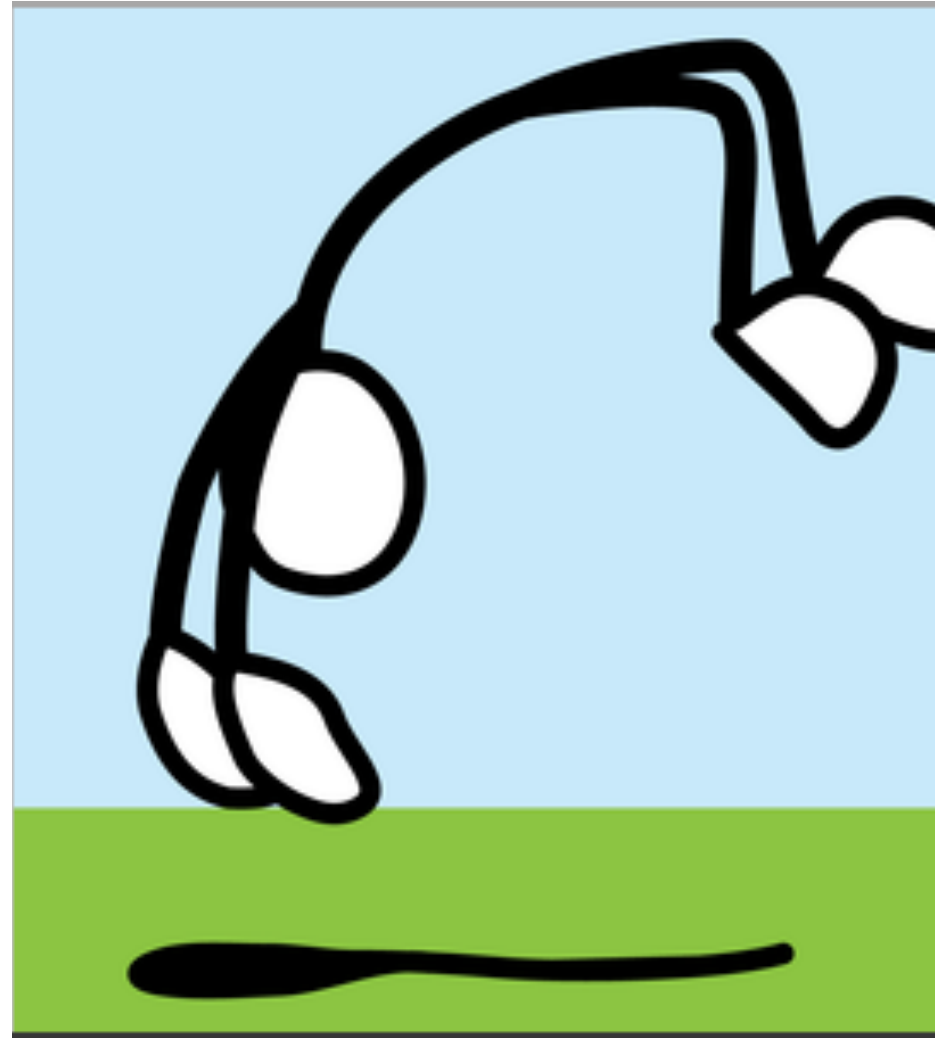
- Utilize the flip!
- Consistency in Everything
  - Email/Announcement Structure
  - Due Dates
  - Office Hours
  - Email Response Time
- Send the Quick Note i.e., the High Five Emails
  - Positive Reinforcement
- Trust your students and communicate that trust
- Respect your students - they need to feel seen and heard





## Flip The Class

- Synchronous + Asynchronous
- Make Available Several Resource Types i.e., Learning Paths
- Utilize the “In” Class Time



# Consistency in Everything

## Email/Announcement Structure

Helps with Reading



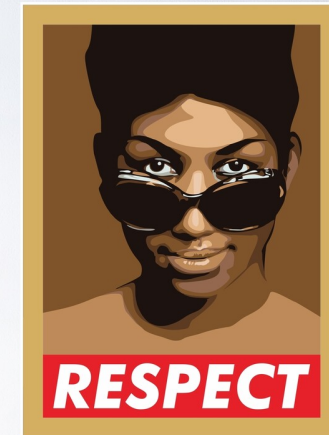
## Due Dates and Deadlines

Helps with Time Management



## Office Hours and Response Time

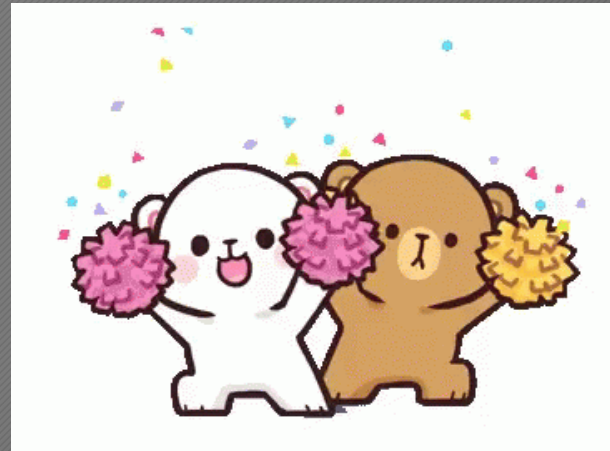
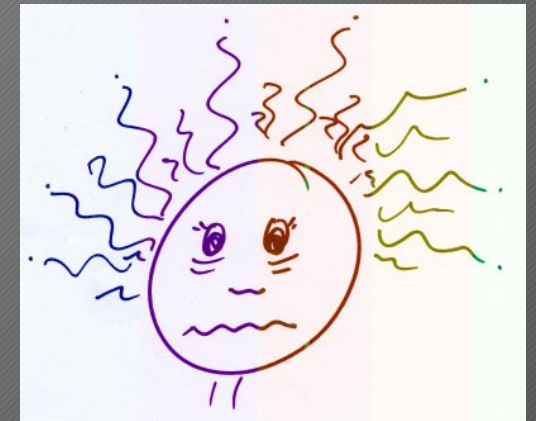
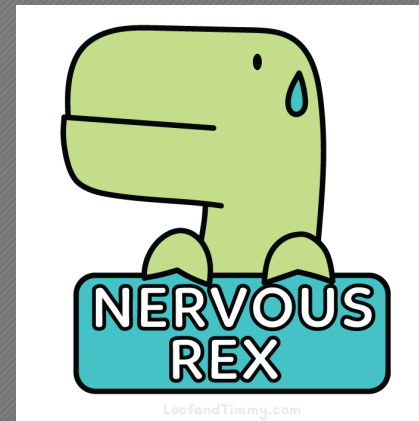
Helps Establish Mutual Respect





# My Email Structure for MWF To Do Lists

- Alliteration in the Title with Course Name and Date
  - STAT 2303 - Waffling Wednesday To Do List! (11/18)
  - STAT 2303 - Frazzled Friday To Do List! (11/13)
  - Etc.
- Sad/Realistic Statement
- Happy/Positive Statement
- Announcements (Black Font)
  - Live Session Preview/Reminders
  - Upcoming Due Dates & Exams
  - Office Hours
- To Do for Today List (Red Font)
  - Exactly What Should Be Accomplished \*TODAY\*
- Sign Off Related to Washing Hands
  - Disinfecting my Containers of Disinfecting Wipes,
  - Washing Hands on Repeat,
  - Sanitizing Frequently Touched Surfaces,
  - Response back from a student: "Currently washing this week's facemasks,"





# Due Dates and Deadlines

Remind them frequently e.g., consistently in consistent To Do Lists

Pace them in your To Do Lists e.g.,

- **Content Material - Section 5 & 6**
  - Located In BB: Course Content -> Weekly Material -> Section 5 & 6 - What Does It Mean & Twice As Mean
  - Watch the following BB Recordings
    - 'CLT & One and Two Sample Means - Recording 1'
    - *Alternative to Recordings*: Go through the 'CLT & One and Two Sample Means PPT with Audio' or the 'CLT & One and Two Sample Means PPT no Audio' Slides 1-20
    - Catch up on the old recordings and/or PPT Slides if you are behind
- **Practice Problems & Quizzes**
  - **PP5 Q1-9 (i.e., Practice Problems 5, Questions 1-9)**
    - Officially Due **Sunday, October 25 @ 11:59 pm**

Send Other  
Reminders Too,  
Why Not?

STAT 2303 - PRINCIPLES OF STATISTICS (1209-THEUA-STAT-2303-SEC001-4232): STAT 2303 - Day Before Monday... Check Those Clocks!

Dear all!

Even if you feel like this...

**I'm not turning my clock back on  
November 1, because the last thing we  
need in 2020 is an extra hour of it.**



... and even if I do too ...

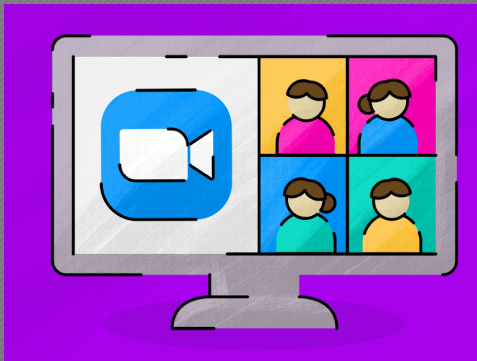
we all changed the clocks anyway!

Make sure to have your time right for your classes tomorrow and have a stupendous super stat Sunday!

Best,

# Office Hours and Email

- Set Times that Work for You! Even if Odd!
- Have Some Set Times (Not Just By Appt.)



- Email Back!
- Have an Established Timeframe for Responses

me..... again.....

To: Samantha Elizabeth Robinson

Hello Mrs. Robinson,





## STAT 2303 - Bravo!

1



Happy STATurday!

... and Bravo-cado! ;)

You dominated the Exam 3 Traditional!

The applied component is being graded as we speak but I just wanted to tell you that you did a wonderful job on the traditional component!

The avocado is a superfood and this bravocado is because you are a superyou!

Enjoy the weekend!

Best,  
S. Robinson, PhD  
sewrob@uark.edu

Greetings Professor Robinson,

Thank you so much for your kind words and encouragement!

I'll be honest - I am flying by the seat of my pants. This semester involved losing a family member very suddenly with little kiddos and taking on the role of aunt in such an extreme way, a very large move an hour away, and a broken ankle. All that being said - I am truly going day to day trying to keep A's in my class, and trying to graduate and also get married in May.

## STAT 2303 Online - Nailed It! (In A Good Way)



I genuinely want you to know how much your positivity and encouragement help!! Thank you for caring so much! I am trying my best to make sure your efforts are not wasted!

**From:** Professor Robinson via Pearson Education <xl-no-reply@pearsoncmg.com>

**Sent:** Tuesday, September 29, 2020 10:47 AM

**Subject:** STAT 2303 Online - Nailed It! (In A Good Way)

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

You are strong. You are determined. You are tough as nails and you nailed Practice Problems 3!

I want you to know that I noticed. I am taking note of your work and I appreciate all of your efforts in our course!

Best,  
S. Robinson, PhD  
sewrob@uark.edu

The Quick Note i.e., The High Five Emails



You enjoy your Halloween weekend as well professor (:

**From:** Professor Robinson via Pearson Education <xl-no-reply@pearsoncmg.com>

**Sent:** Thursday, October 29, 2020 8:20 PM

**To:** [REDACTED]

**Subject:** STAT 2303 - Exam 2 Tradit' !!!

You did so well! I just wanted to say so!

Have a great Halloween and keep going on this upward trajectory!!!

Best,

S. Robinson, PhD

The Quick Note  
i.e., The High Five Emails

STAT 2303 - Taco'bout That! Taco'bout You!

Section 3 is one of the hardest sections in our course... most students would have been afraid today...



But it wasn't that scary after all! At least not for you! 🤔

Thank you for working on Practice Problems 3 and getting that 26.6667% or better! I appreciate you!

Have a terrific Tuesday night!

Best,

# The Quick Note i.e., The High Five Emails

## STAT 2303 - Rock Star!

I have never had a college professor tell me that I am doing good, so I just wanted to write you back and tell you how much I appreciated this email!!!  
Thank you!!!!

## STAT 2303 Online - Practice Problems Pros!



To: Samantha Elizabeth Robinson

Thank you! I did not drop the course because of your email reply and I'm glad that #1 & 2 are completed!  
Sincerely,

[Redacted]

**Subject:** STAT 2303 Online - Practice Problems Pros!

You are making it look easy! Keep up the good work! I appreciate you!

And, Happy, Happy \*STAT-y\*! Enjoy your Labor Day! ;-)

Best,  
S. Robinson, PhD  
sewrob@uark.edu

## STAT 2303 - Rock Star!

Hi Dr. Robinson,

Thank you!! This email really made my day yesterday!

I think you're doing a great job with the course! The daily to do lists are super helpful, and I think your understanding and happy attitude would make me much more likely to talk to you and ask for help if I were to get behind (I tend to feel bad when that happens, and then it's a slippery slope).

Again, thank you for reaching out, and I'll let you know if I have any suggestions in the future!

Best,

[Redacted]

**From:** Professor Robinson via Pearson Education <xl-no-reply@pearsoncmg.com>

**Sent:** Thursday, August 27, 2020 5:26 PM

**Subject:** STAT 2303 - Rock Star!

Thank you for working on your assignments and doing so well already! You are a rock star!

After your successful completion of this first one third of one eighth of the semester assignments, I am excited to see you keep moving forward in this course! ;) You are making it look easy (despite how much work I am sure that you are already putting in)! You are simply amazing!!!

If you have any idea of things that I could do to help you a little more in this course, please let me know! I am always looking to improve the course in real time and/or in the future and I value your feedback (despite this strange period of remote delivery)!

For now, keep up the good work! I appreciate it!

Best,



# How To Communicate Trust & Respect



- Know Your Content!
- Model Behavior and Manage the “Classroom”
- Know Your Students and Let Students Know You
- Be Self-Aware
  - Consider Personal Biases and Perceptions
  - Think About Your Own Body Language and Tone of Voice
  - Reflect Often on Your Treatment of Students
    - (e.g., encouragement, dealing with deadlines, etc.)
- Have a Reliable, Easily Available Communication Path
  - “Office” Hours and Email

# How To Communicate Trust & Respect

- Listen To Your Students (even the complaints)
  - Elicit Student Thoughts and Feedback
  - Be Responsive to Student Needs
  - Reach Out to Students 'Individually'
- Assume Nothing and Avoid Judgement
- Tidbits
  - Be *Compassionate*
  - Be *Flexible*
  - And...



# How To Communicate Trust & Respect

- Listen To Your Students (even the complaints)
  - Elicit Student Thoughts and Feedback
  - Be Responsive to Student Needs
  - Reach Out to Students 'Individually'
- Assume Nothing and Avoid Judgement
- Tidbits
  - Be *Compassionate*
  - Be *Flexible*
  - And...

SMILE!





# End Results

## **Honestly**

- I hated this year...

# End Results

**But!**

- It was worth it in the end and always will be!

STAT 2303 - You Got This!



Professor Robinson,

I just wanted to let you know how much I have appreciated these emails over the course of the semester! It really makes my day when I do well and I get an encouraging email from you :) It has been so great having you as a professor (and I will be a little sad not seeing you in my inbox anymore).

I have never had a professor who is so invested in their students' success, and it truly makes a difference! Even though this semester was very different, I think you did a great job teaching us and making everything feel a little more normal.

Just thought I would send you some kind words back for a change. I hope you have a great rest of the year!

Best,

I wanted to send you an email to thank you for being one of the best Professors I have ever had! Taking an online course is so hard and I have always felt so disconnected. I did not feel this way with your course, and I want you to know how much that helped me to persevere.

This semester has brought on many challenges outside of COVID. I do want to apologize for not delivering my best towards the end of this semester. The issues with my Dads amputation to experiencing a miscarriage has been extremely difficult.

I want you to know your methods of teaching had nothing to do with that. If this would have been a normal time, I know without a doubt I would have come out of your course with an A!

I am sure you all do not hear this enough, but I am eternally grateful for you!

You have been the gentle wind at my back this semester Dr. Robinson. I appreciate your encouragement. I will take the traditional Exam 3 today.

# a million little things Questions?

Thank you!

Samantha Robinson { sewrob@uark.edu }

University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

## Gratitude Through Memes

3

CH

Tue 10/6/2020 1:07 PM

To: Samantha Elizabeth Robinson



Show all 3 attachments (358 KB)

Download all

Save all to OneDrive - University of Arkansas

Good afternoon!

Happy Tuesday, this is not about an assignment or class or not understanding a concept. I just wanted to send you some wholesome fall and Halloween memes because you deserve them! I am so thankful to have a professor who genuinely cares about her students and encourages them like crazy. I know my classmates and I sincerely appreciate it. Statistics may not be my thing but at least I have a professor who makes it enjoyable!